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ABSTRACT

The current use of "informative and persuasive" speeches as public address types cannot be justified on functional grounds. The types of speeches chosen through which to gain adherence of minds are secondary to what it is that an individual wishes to gain adherence to. Specifically, the chosen thesis will determine the type of speeches to be employed in any given circumstance. Speech courses, then, should deal foremost with propositional approaches, thereby eliminating some degree of artificiality from the speaking situation and offering an inventional methodology that is more scientific. Using a problem solving approach, speakers can determine all the questions which they could ask in order to collect data to arrive at a thesis. From the data they may then, on a topics basis, select that which they must give to an audience to gain further adherence to a thesis. This "stases" approach of asking subquestions in describing areas of potential issues is orderly, logical, and efficient. (Thirty-four references are attached.) (KEH)

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A FAREWELL TO INFORMATIVE AND PERSUASIVE SPEECHES: A RATIONALE AND A PROPOSAL

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The purpose of this paper will be to look at the use of "informative" and "persuasive" speeches as public address types. I will look at the specific types of speeches and what the speaker seems to be attempting with each. I will discuss a return to what some might consider a more Aristotelian approach to the teaching of the kinds of speeches, giving contemporary justification for that approach. Finally, I will suggest the classification system works well when combined with a "new stasis" approach to modern rhetorical practice.

It seems that virtually every text on public speaking (and thus, one might reason, most courses) offer at least two "types" of speeches for the student in the basic course to present when the basic course includes some elements of public speaking or is entirely public speaking. These are the "informative speech" and the "persuasive speech." This practice even extends to categories that are utilized for the college and university contest formats. One recent study found this practice to be prevalent in nearly ninety percent of the current texts dealing with public speaking (Zeman, 1987).

This practice of using the informative-persuasive types persists despite evidence to suggest that no real functional reason exists for this practice. In fact, there is evidence to suggest the dichotomy used for the informative-persuasive typing is largely an outcome of individual definition and cannot be justified on functional grounds.

Contemporary Typing and "Informative" - "Persuasive" Controversy

Most contemporary texts use the "informative" and "persuasive" categories to list types of speeches. Comments by some authors include suggesting that these may indeed be separate and identifiable types. "The informative speech creates understanding by clarifying, enlightening, correcting misunderstandings, and demonstrating how something works. . . . The persuasive speech tries to influence attitudes or behaviors by strengthening or changing existing attitudes or by motivating the audience to do something" (DeVito, 1990, p. 23). "The informative speech is meant to increase knowledge whereas the persuasive speech is meant to alter or change attitudes and behavior" (Seiler, 1988, p. 244). Lucas (1989) suggests, "the difference between informing and persuading is the difference between 'explaining' and 'exhorting'" (p. 52).

In fact, to achieve this definite typing, some authors have had to suggest that the speech should be total source oriented, not receiver oriented, when writing, ". . . we accept an exclusively source-determined position on persuasion" (Burgoon & Miller, 1990, p. 234).

If persuasion is, however, as Brembeck and Howell (1976) have suggested, "Communication intended to influence choice" (p. 19), then there is reason to suggest that all communication may well fit a much larger, all inclusive typology. Cronkhite (1969) points this out when he writes, "It is difficult to conceive of a communication which would not change evaluative or approach-avoidance behavior in some way, and the point of view thus far expressed has been that symbol manipulation which causes

behavior change constitutes persuasion. Examples of communications which are 'purely informative' in this sense are hard to come by" (p. 13).

This is conceded by some authors, even though they may still continue to offer the "informative" and "persuasive" type of speeches in their texts. Berko, Wolvin, and Wolvin (1989) acknowledge the nature of the controversy when stating, "Traditionally, informative speaking has been defined as that type of discourse that imparts new information, secures understanding, or reinforces accumulated information. At present, however, controversies persist among communication theorists in regard to this definition. One question involved in the debate is whether all speaking is persuasive in nature; that is, whether the distinction between what has traditionally been defined as persuasive speaking is simply a matter of theoretical degree" (p. 442). As Osborn and Osborn state, "We refer . . . to 'the informative speech' as though it were a distinct and separate category of speaking, but human speechmaking rarely breaks down into such neat subdivisions" (p. 293).

It is not unusual for experimenters using "informative" speeches to find the speeches result in attitude changes on the part of the receivers of the speeches. Tompkins and Samovar (1964), using an "informative" message, found significant changes in attitudes. Though the speech being typed as "informative" was not unanimously typed by panels typing the speeches (in fact, eighty-four percent of the faculty panel and seventy-seven of the student panel found the speech to be "informative"). Irwin and

Brockhaus (1963) found similar results of the effects of "informative" speeches in a study they conducted.

Given the evidence of functional unsoundness, it is not only reasonable, but imperative that another approach to speech typing be examined. A more functional approach is one that types along an older approach of naming speech types--the propositional approach. But one should not utilize a propositional approach just because it is not an informative-persuasive labelling, but because there is a sound rationale for its utilization.

A Classical Basis for Types of Speeches

Baldwin (1959) points out that Aristotle claimed there were three types of oratory--the deliberative, the forensic, and the epideictic. Each of these may be individually described.

Of the deliberative, Aristotle claimed the speeches were "speeches of counsel or advice" (p. I, 3). Aristotle felt that the deliberative speeches were those of the future, as expressed by their nature--exhortation and dissuasion. These were the speeches in which we attempted to get people to act. This classification corresponds roughly to the modern view of a speech to actuate or persuade. Gronbeck, Ehninger, Monroe, and German (1988) state, "the [speaker] is never happy until the audience internalizes (adopts as its own credo) or acts on the speech. The demand is personal change" (p. 239). Others, such as Wilson, Arnold, and Wertheimer (1978), view this as a form of persuasive speech.

Aristotle felt the forensic dealt with "justice and injustice," (p. I, 3) and was, therefore, a speech which dealt with the past. According to Aristotle, the forensic was the speech suited to the courts. Marsh (1967) added that the modern concept also deals with ". . . a completed act" (p. 12). Other modern writers have tended to call these speeches convincing, though those authors make the speech to convince more inclusive than just dealing with justice and injustice of acts committed.

Epideictic speech, says Aristotle, is for "praise and blame" (p. I, 3). The time to which these speeches belong is the present. The modern view of epideictic seems somewhat confused. Some writers place this as a special class for the special occasions, such as the Fourth of July. Others seem to place it under persuasive speeches, aimed at getting belief or perhaps the reenforcement of some previously held attitudes.

Glancing through the contemporary texts, we may find the types of speeches described by various terms other than to actuate, to convince, and to persuade. We find such terms as to inform, to entertain, to stimulate, to induce inquiry, to reenforce beliefs and feelings, to inspire, etc. A few of the speeches seem to lie outside some convenient classification system and are simply relegated to special occasion speeches, ranging from valedictory addresses down to acceptance speeches.

Contemporary Speech Purpose

At this point one is prompted to ask, "For what, in general, do we use the types of speeches?" In answering this question, I

would contend discourse aims at gaining the adherence of minds. As Erickson (1969) states:

> The purpose of the speaker's discourse would be to move the members of his audience toward acceptance of his thesis, i.e., to move them on this continuum some appreciable distance from where they were towards agreement with the speaker's point of view.
>
> Any thesis, proposition, or central idea that one wishes to present for audience acceptance, would be thought of as moving that audience some appreciable distance on this continuum. The point being made here is that acceptance or rejection of a speaker's thesis is not an either-or matter of acceptance or rejection. The recipient of the discourse, if he accepts or rejects one's thesis, does so as a matter of degree. Therefore, as far as purpose of discourse is concerned, the speaker or writer finds himself hopefully attempting to influence others to some degree towards acceptance of his position (p. 14).

Propositions of Fact, Definition, Value, and Policy

If these are the uses of the types of speeches, then, I would contend, the types of speeches one chooses through which to gain adherence are secondary to what it is that one wishes to gain adherence to. Specifically, what one chooses as a thesis will determine the type of speeches which will be employed in any given circumstance. Having agreed that the general purpose of

public address is to put forth (or, if you will, to support) a thesis, then we can offer a procedure that is based on critical thinking as the basis for typing speeches.

When Littlejohn and Jabusch (1987) state, "Persuasion is communication on which two or more individuals act together to bring about an outcome of change," we have a stated rationale for saying that discourse arises from the propositions or theses which speakers advocate. They appear in four forms: propositions of value, propositions of fact, and propositions of policy--that might correspond to those offered by Aristotle--and propositions of definition.

Propositions of fact may be said to include Aristotle's forensic oratory. But propositions of fact go beyond the past. They are also concerned with what Erickson says are present and future facts. No attempt is made to determine the desirability of the facts, merely the "truth" or probability of each. We would, therefore, find not only a proposition such as "John Doe is not guilty," but also "Columbus was not the first to discover America" (past fact), "Flying saucers contain men from outer space" (present fact), and "It will rain tomorrow" (future fact).

Propositions of value appear to correspond to the theses of Aristotle's epideictic speeches. According to Bartanen and Frank (1991) these concern ". . . core conceptions of what is desirable" (p. 35). These then are judgments about things based on some criteria, hence value. But propositions of value may also concern the drawing up of the criteria. We may find a proposition of value to be worded, "Such and such constitutes a

good book" (developing criteria), or "The Last Mile is a good book" (applying data to criteria).

Propositions of policy are the materials of which debate seasons are made. More importantly, they are the elements of our legislative system and correspond to the theses of Aristotelian deliberative oratory. Propositions of policy concern themselves with courses of action. Propositions of policy may take one of two forms; we may find people advocating we cease current practices. Examples include "We should offer unlimited free post-high school education to everyone" (adopt a new policy), or "We should abolish foreign aid" (stop present policy).

Propositions of definition are those we offer for the purpose of clarifying concepts. When our goal is simply to seek an understanding of what a concept is, we are offering definition. This would correspond to the classification of one type of "informative" (Gronbeck, et al.), what Graves and Oldsey (1963) refer to as "questions of meanings" (pp. 89-115), and Walter and Scott's "definitions" (pp. 205-223). Examples include "Free speech is the right to say what you want, where you want, and when you want as long as you don't maliciously harm others by your actions," and "Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder, characterized by image distortions, possessing symptoms of abnormal bodily changes, that may have both physical and psychological causes, and may be treated by therapy."

What is important to realize is that any of the propositions might lend itself to a treatment that could be termed "informative," "convincing," persuasive," "entertaining," etc.

Whether it achieves the purpose the speaker had in mind will, of course, be entirely in the minds of the listeners. Speakers should begin propositionally and then choose the treatment.

At this point I should like to argue that if discourse is thesis oriented, speech pedagogy is offering additional artificiality to ask students to offer speeches that inform, persuade, etc.; for these are not the true ends, but rather they are to be viewed as stylistic means to achieve that thesis adherence. I would further argue that in teaching speech courses by dealing with the propositions we would find some degree of artificiality eliminated from the speaking situation, for our orientation would be toward the message and not toward the stylistic means. Further, the teaching of the propositional approach will offer an inventional methodology that is more scientific and more complete than other approaches seem to be.

Invention

The nature of the propositions with which the speaker is concerned has been discussed. Though the propositions did not correspond with Aristotle's classification of ethical, logical, and physical set up in the Topica, they did correspond with the kinds of propositions which might arise from Aristotle's threefold classification of the types of oratory--the forensic "rising from" the propositions of fact, the epideictic to propositions of value, and the deliberative to propositions of policy.

We need now to look at how these types of speeches lend themselves to various inventional approaches. First we'll look at some contemporary texts on the inventional process. Secondly, a rationale will be presented for including a "new stasis" approach to modern rhetorical practice. Finally, an examination of the operation model of this "new stasis" will be made.

Modern rhetoric texts deal with the invention process in a variety of ways. Lucas (1989) says,

> If you think about what you are finding in your research, you will see your topic just a little bit differently with each note you take. You will find new relationships, develop new questions, explore new angles. You will, in short, begin to write your speech in your head even as you do the research. As you learn more about the topic, you will formulate a central idea, begin to sketch out main points and supporting points, experiment with ways of organizing your thoughts (p. 112).

Osborn and Osborn (1988) don't really offer the speaker many inventional clues as they offer the advice to find a topic, narrow it down, determine the specific purpose, and collect information.

Gronbeck, et al., (1988) seem to be making the same type of comment when stating:

> Ordinarily you will start by drawing together what you already know about the subject and deciding roughly what ideas you want to include. Nearly always,

> however, you will find that what you already know is not enough. You will need to gather additional information--facts, illustrations, stories, and examples--with which you can develop your speech (pp. 60-61).

Though Barrett (1988) is willing to concede that the selection of the subject will be governed by the speaker, the audience, and occasion, he offers little more inventive strategy than to state, "There are five fundamental steps in speech preparation: 1. Choosing an appropriate subject. 2. Narrowing the subject to a topic. 3. Determining the primary end. 4. Wording the proposition carefully. 5. Using the extemporaneous and conversational mode" (pp. 41-42).

From the previous samples we might readily conclude that the modern rhetorician recognizes the need for the speaker to make some systemic collection of data prior to the presentation of the discourse. What is notably absent from the previous samples is a rhetorical handle to make the inquiry. However, some contemporary authors have offered more concrete tools to the inventional process.

Oliver, Zelko, and Holtzman (1968) offered a more extensive inventional suggestion when offering a threefold analysis to include "assessing the communicator's present state of knowledge; assessing the situation, subject, and what is called for; and determining how much material and what kind, is needed" (p. 95).

What is lacking in the above guideline is the means to achieve that determination of which they speak. One of the authors extends this analysis in a later text and mentions that

in getting the speech ready for delivery one must first pass through analysis, synthesis, and application. In the analysis and the synthesis processes Oliver (1971) speaks of "looking for details," "clarifying your ideas," "evaluating practical considerations," and "finding the major points" (p. 71). Once again, what is lacking is the specific methodology.

Auer (1967) moved closer to a methodology when he suggested asking questions such as:

> Why did I choose this subject in the first place? What made me think my audience might be interested in it? What does my audience probably know about it already? What do I know about it from firsthand experience? Do I know enough about the subject at this time--to divide it into subtopics or related parts? to view its development chronologically? to identify its most important features? to recognize its controversial aspects? to understand differing viewpoints about it? What gaps in my knowledge remain to be filled in? (p. 33).

Napiecinski and Ruechelle (1964) have suggested that the speaker follow through with investigation along the steps listed by the philosopher John Dewey. A notable shortcoming of the text, however, is that only persuasive policy questions are approached in this manner.

What is important to note is that all of the texts so far mentioned have failed to indicate one essential aspect of invention: namely, how does one determine the issues around

which any speech is centered. Many modern writers seem to feel that speakers "instinctively" discover the points around which speeches move.

Locating the Issues

The concept of locating the issues is certainly not a new one. Dieter's rather definitive study points out:

> In Pre-Aristotelian Greek thought, in Aristotle's physical philosophy and in the metaphysical rhetoric of Post-Aristotelian Peripatetics of the Third Century before Christ, it was the rest, pause, halt or standing still, which inevitably occurs between opposite as well as between contrary "moves," or motions. In rhetorical Noesis, it was frequently identified with the thing sought in the zetesis, i.e., the zetema, quaestio, or the Question (p. 369).
>
> Rhetorical stases appear to be closely related to the traditional fourfold Peripatetic and Stoic analysis of matter. Not intrinsically a part of this analytical process itself but borrowing terminology and procedure from it, the stases are halts or blocks set up and standing in the way of the various major (or subordinate) steps in the analysis (Nadeau, 1964, p. 393).

Nadeau (1964) adds that in the Second Century B. C. Hermagoras said this fourfold analysis of matter was of conjecture, definition, quality, and objection. Hermogenes, in the Second

Century A.D., was still retaining this classification, but with more extensive divisions.

The concept of stases was not exclusively Greek, for many of the Latin writers utilized it. Cicero's De Inventione lists the classification of issue or constitutio as ". . . the conjectural, qualitative, definitional, or translative, either any one of these or at times more than one" (p. I, x, 14). Quintilian felt that ". . . every question has its basis. . . " (p. III, vi, 7).

According to Thonssen and Baird (1948):

> This concept is among the most important contributions of the Latin writers to rhetorical theory. By elevating the study of invention, and by providing the speaker with methods by which to find, evaluate, and use his ideas on a given case, this doctrine exercised a profound influence upon subsequent theory and practice in public speaking and debating (pp. 93-94).

Having discovered the stases, according to Ad Herennium, "It remained . . . to show by what method we can adapt the means of invention to each type of issue or its subdivisions and likewise what sort of technical arguments one ought to seek or avoid; both of these departments belong to Proof and Refutation" (p. II, ii, 2). This is the same advice Wilson et al. (1990) offer when stating, "As soon as you commit yourself to a speech subject and a purpose, your problem becomes one of finding lines of thinking that will enable you to accomplish what you want to accomplish (p. 107).

A "New Stases" from Problem Solving

"These lines of thinking" offer the basis for that rationale for a "new stases" approach. If we are to look at those steps which Dewey (1933) included in the process of reflective thinking and incorporate the types of questions or propositions into this schema, we might emerge with the following:

1. Locate Problem Area (as a felt difficulty)
2. From Problem Area identify any number of Specific Problems (Articulate verbal formulations with the grammatical construct of a Question and select one.) A Specific Problem is any question that needs an answer and involves an issue. We may have problems of fact, definition, value, or policy.
3. After the problem is stated, terms should be defined. (It is suggested that one use operational definitions.)
4. After definition, the question should be clearly understood so that sub-questions could be asked of this basic problem question to help determine what one would need to know in order to get an acceptable answer to the basic question.
5. At this point (usually not before) the student visits the library to find the answers to these sub-questions- this is his data.
6. He examines his data so that a conclusion(s) can be drawn from it which serves as an answer to the basic question and the Thesis of the subsequent speech.
7. In the speech the Data become the supporting material

for the Thesis or Central Idea, etc.

Now we have a rationale for asking what are the issues, questions, or "new stases." We have stated (1) there exist four forms for propositions speakers use, (2) in order to answer the major issue we ask subquestions, and (3) asking the subquestions gives direction to our inventional process.

At this point we might rightfully ask: What is the nature of the subquestions which we should ask in order to determine what we need to know to answer the basic question? Mudd and Sillars (1975) offer a rationale for the asking of the subquestions in describing areas of potential issues as:

1. Questions of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed policy.
2. The acceptability of the criteria used to evaluate judgments of value and fact.
3. The relative importance of the criteria.
4. The judgment that is made when the criteria are applied to the available evidence.
5. The accuracy of the evidence itself (pp. 60-63).

It becomes apparent that certain types of subquestions appear to be relevant to questions of fact, some to questions of definition, more to questions of value, and all to questions of policy. Further, some persons would assert that the very type of question and, hence, the nature of the proposition which answers the question are a direct outgrowth of what the speaker seeks in terms of an answer.

Let us now look at some specific types of problems and see how a person might utilize this problem-solving approach to the thesis. Let's assume that the speaker has decided to tell an audience that "Dinosaurs are not reptiles." He apparently already feels the need to communicate in this area. He will have framed the specific problem as "Are dinosaurs reptiles?" and then drawn some definitional limits, such as "This is to be concerned with extinct creatures that were herbivores and carnivores." He is then ready to ask, "What do I need to know in order to answer my question?" Since this is a sub-set of the question of fact, most of his questions will probably deal with the securing of evidence and the reliability of that evidence. He will want to ask, "What information currently exists regarding these creatures?" "Are the data reliable?" "What are the characteristics authorities agree are reptilian?" "To what degree did dinosaurs possess these characteristics?" and so forth. This for a proposition of fact.

What if the speaker is going to frame a specific problem of definition, such as "What is an eglet?" He might ask: (1) What is the origin of the concept (etymology)? (2) To what family does this concept belong (classification)? (3) What is this concept different from (contrast)? (4) What is this concept similar to (comparison)? (5) What are things that illustrate this concept (examples)? (6) What do reputable sources say that this concept is (authority)? (7) How does this concept operate (function)? (8) What can the concept be broken into (parts)? (9) What would I exclude from this concept--or what is the

concept not (negation)? In answering these questions the speaker might further question the reliability of the evidence and the source of the evidence.

Questions that are concerned with value offer subquestions that involve criteria and the application of data to that criteria. "What is a good book?" could be considered a question of value in which one attempts to establish certain criteria as justifiable. Some other questions seek to apply data to criteria to make judgments, such as, "Was Abraham Lincoln a better president than George Washington?" In the latter question two items must be ascertained generally before the answer can be derived: What is a good president? and what are the data about the two persons which we can evaluate in light of the criteria? We might even ask the question, "Was Abraham Lincoln a good president?" This would still require looking at two questions which must be answered. First, what is a good president? and second, what are the data that we can evaluate in light of the criteria of a good president that we establish?

Questions of policy seem to imply the treatment along lines that are inclusive of both value and fact. Most authorities in argumentation will suggest questions of policy lend themselves to analysis along the lines of stock issues. Zeman (1970) suggests the following in manner in her analysis of "Should the electoral college be abolished?": 1. What is the electoral college? 2. Why was it established? 3. What reason(s) exist for changing the status quo? 4. Is the need to change an inherent one? 5. What solutions eliminate the reasons for the change? 6. Would

the new solutions eliminate the reasons for the change? 7. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of changing to a new system?

Tucker (1971) offers much this same approach in suggesting that speakers should develop a general system approach, and this in turn could help them in a search for truth. The system of Tucker is the same as the stases concept; however, he doesn't apply it to specific problems, rather problem areas.

Having a stasis approach in mind, the speaker can now turn to the topics. The substance of what he has done is to determine all the questions which he and others could ask in order to collect data to arrive at his thesis. From the data he may now, on a topics basis, select that which he must give to his audience to gain further adherence to his thesis. The process has been orderly, logical, and efficient. This writer would further claim it is also effective.

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